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Menagerie

2014



Lyons Township High School
100 S. Brainard Avenue
La Grange, Illinois 60525
www.lths.net/menagerie
Contact: menagerie@lths.net



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Mission Statement

Menagerie is the student-run literary and art magazine of Lyons Township High School. Our goal is to showcase and synthesize the works of our talented students in a professional publication. By honoring the writers and artists of our school, we hope to encourage their future work and inspire innovation in our community.



Sweetness
Ines Makismovic
Digital



Editors' Note



The wide and fluctuating range of human emotion is complex; when we thought about this range, we realized emotions are too fleeting to capture in a single word. While psychologists have divided human emotion into categories: happiness, surprise, anger, fear, disgust, and sadness, and colors often mimic these same patterns: orange symbolizing happiness and rejuvenation, blue reflecting a type of melancholy spirit. In this edition of *Menagerie*, we endeavored to visually depict the relationship between an emotional spectrum and a color spectrum.

We decided to map this merging of human emotion and color symbolism through a spectrum line. The pieces have been organized by the color of the emotion felt while reading them, which is symbolized by the spectrum line and echoed in the color of the page number. Additionally, by physically constructing a line that denotes the intensity and the emotional shifts of the piece, the reader gets a bit of a free sample of what is in store on each page.

One glance into this issue reveals the complexity, the wide spectrum of art and literature we have chosen to feature, from the dramatic dimension in “Going Rogue” to the more meditative “Quiet” to the disgust of consumerism in “The Virgin Mary.” The vibrant shade of red used in “The Space Between the Stars” mirrors the strong diction which evokes the emotion of a sleepless night, and the orange used in “Off their Rockers” highlights the whimsical playfulness of a stuffed animal.

With a minimalist design juxtaposed with pulsating colors, we are proud to present the 2014 edition of *Menagerie*.

“A work of
art which did
not begin in
emotion
is not art.”

- Paul Cezanne





My Sister Andrea

By: Madeline Simms

Our friendship is a game of Candy Land;
together we siege King Candy's fortress.
Your laugh is butternut squash soup;
the taste spreads through my belly like a glowstick,
orange sound, pushing through my pursed lips.
We are the Bennet sisters of tomorrow,
or maybe today.
Some say we are twins but
I tend to think of you as a skin and blister kinda gal
with a wild mane, however, small diamond teeth.
Sisters, sisters, there were never such devoted sisters
plays on the scratched CD of solidity.
You are unpredictable, an undiscovered universe,
ready to fly off the roof of the forbidden attic window.
I love you more than the peanut butter and jelly
that will be devoured before the end of this poem.
The rock n' roll blueberry,
never the wet sandwich of the group.
Amicus magnis neccessarios, quam ignis et aqua.
My eyes talk to yours in an ocean of
shared clothes and giggles.
Together, we are the Queens of Candy Land.



Rabbit Hole
Sarah Walton
Digital





The Space Between the Stars

By: Margaret Byrne

“It’s 3 AM, who do you want answering the phone?”

-Political Ad circa 2008

I guess I could answer it. I’m not doing much at
3 AM. I’m sure I could fit it in somewhere between
restless pacing of my room and watching my ceiling
fan go around,
and around,
and around,
and around...

It’s 3 AM and sleep is my unrequited love.

I’m asked, “Why don’t you just lie down and close
your eyes?”

Well mister, that’s just asking for trouble.

When my mind is so hyperactive that 48 hours
without rest does nothing to slow it down,
scary things appear behind closed eyelids.

The sensory deprivation forces an intimate
examination of the depths of my thinking organ.

This means plunging into the abyss of the burden of
consciousness,

being lost in a swirling sea of ambiguity with no
anchor of absolutes to keep me from spinning
around
and around,
and around,
and around...

A sickening disembodiment where there is no self to
be manifested,

being certain only of uncertainty, unless of course,
there is a certainty to be found of which I am
certainly uncertain,

grappling with the knowledge that at best I am a
random conglomeration of atoms with only
self-awareness to negate total freedom of existence
without purpose,

understanding that any perception of connectivity is an
illusion because I am fundamentally and inescapably
alone,

an inertia of thought hurling me deeper and deeper
into the emptiness where the more I search the more I
despair in the discovery that there is nothing, nothing to
be found.

The further pulled in I get the more the air pushes down
on me, the more the ringing in my ears echoes in my
head, the more the panic wells up inside of me, and the
more the splitting pain behind my forehead threatens to
rip apart my head.

So please, call me tonight, 3 hours before the horizon
pales. Give me something mundane to distract me from
obliterating reality.

Or... here’s a challenge if you’re brave: Sit with me in
silence and watch the blackened sky between the stars.
Climb through the cultivated minds to paint an ocean
over every thought and watch the waves carry all meaning
away. Surrender to the incomprehensible.

I wonder if it’s any less lonely to be together alone.



All the Leaves in the World

By: Laura McAllister

Lucy puts a cigarette up to her lips. She's never smoked before.

The view from the front porch is dismal: overcast, like a dark watercolor wash, and still as death. The trees have either dropped their leaves in a brown flurry or look like they're about to. The cement beneath Lucy is cold. She rests most of her weight on her hips, propping up slightly with her elbows, and pushes a long strand of hair behind her ear. Even when she takes a breath, the air around her doesn't move.

A cough erupts from her chest. All the tar and nicotine leave a bad flavor on her tongue, but she sucks it in again anyway.

Slowly, a leaf tumbles from the sky. It has a hard time pushing through the undisturbed layers of sky. It's red, one of the last ones. Nothing else has been truly red since summer ended, since she and Anthony called it quits. In July, and even into August, red was the only color in her world. It was the shade Anthony would turn every time she smiled widely, the color of their matching concert shirts, the color of the sun beading down on their backs. Now, the world is brown, soggy, and left at the curb for a yard waste company to haul away.

The tip of the cigarette flickers orange and yellow, sending a trail of smoke into the air. It creates a soft mirage against the trees that line the block. Everything is quiet here.

* * *

In June, all the trees had broad green leaves that captured the late spring rain. It was underneath her umbrella that she first met Anthony, who was walking somewhere indefinite, as he often did. He had closely trimmed hair the color of red delicious apples and lips that he bit the color of cherries. Immediately, Lucy saw him as a summer fling in the waiting. She let him stand under the umbrella with her.

"Where are you headed?" she asked.

He smiled coyly. "You tell me."

She didn't yet know that he liked the Beatles, that his favorite color was scarlet, or that this was a line that he had been tossing around in his head all day waiting for someone to ask him the right question.

**"Now, the world is brown, soggy, and left at the curb for
a yard waste company to haul away."**

He hadn't yet told her that he loved the way she wore socks that came over her boots and dared to wear her hair down in the rain.

* * *



The hot part of the cigarette draws dangerously close to Lucy's fingertips. She imagines dropping the cigarette at the base of the last red tree, burning it to the ground, and the thought excites her. She stretches her legs and wiggles her toes, which are bare and exposed. The strand falls into her face again, and she wonders why it can't stay back in the ponytail with all the other strands. Thunder rips across the sky. It resonates against the houses and the plants, up and down the empty street.

Along with the summer solstice came a sudden switch in climate, from soggy to steamy. This was the time she and Anthony found out that they shared an undying love for a somewhat underground band who, by coincidence, were coming to the Four Seasons open amphitheater downtown. Anthony bought two tickets.

They prepared for the concert by listening to every album in chronological order. Some of the songs, as they flew around her mind, reminded Lucy of Anthony. They were all her favorite songs, even the ones that didn't have to do with love, but just had a nice melody.

As she walked to his house, Lucy noticed three more red trees. Somehow, these trees had skipped earlier, more subtle stages and had plunged directly into the depths of crimson. Not even a week of July had gone by yet.

A drop comes down from the sky to squelch Lucy's flame. The cigarette rests limp between her middle and index fingers, damp now, and useless. She moves her arm to toss it into the grass, make it look like some random passerby had dropped it there and save herself the trouble of explanation. But something stops her.

“He had closely *trimmed* hair the color of **red delicious** apples and lips that he **bit** the color of cherries.”

The concert was filled with strangers. None were willing to let Lucy and Anthony get through to the stage, so there was no clear view of the band.

“As long as we're not going to be able to see, we might as well listen somewhere more private,” Anthony suggested.



Already the ground was littered with leaves, some partially decayed, most still vibrant and intact. He led her further and further into a sparsely vegetated area of the grounds, where there were trees, a bench, and still some sound from the stage. They sat down, soothing their burning feet, and Anthony laid his hand gently on top of hers.

He began to lean in slowly. Leaves fell from the trees more and more rapidly the closer he came.

“Do you see that?” Lucy asked. “The trees are throwing confetti.” These words were meant to distract him, throw him off his game, but they were punctuated, instead, with his lips against her cheek.

“This is beautiful,” he said. “I’m going to make you a crown, no, a palace, out of all the leaves in the world.”

She didn’t respond. His words hung like dusty cobwebs, choking her.

* * *

Lucy pictures a house made of leaves. Eventually, it would rot and die, or turn brown and cave in on itself, gagging the occupants. Anything built on such flimsy materials will collapse.

With this thought in mind, she strolls, through the pouring rain, to the curb. Finally, the strand of hair is staying back, held in place by its wet state.

The leaves are saturated with rainwater, but she lifts them regardless. She tears the first one, ripping it to shreds with wild abandon. What is left of the leaf in the aftermath looks like the figure of a boy. The coloration of the leaf gives the boy red hair.

“I’m going to make you a *crown*, no, a *palace*, out of
all the leaves in the world.”

She folds, rather than tears, the next leaf, until it looks like a girl. Using another leaf, she shapes socks and boots, which she wraps around the leaf girl’s legs. She then constructs three walls and sits the boy, alone, inside of them. He falls to the floor. She adds a roof to her creation.

Lucy joyfully throws the cigarette into the curb and regresses, with the leaf girl, to her house. While her back is turned, the leaf



Leaf in Water
Erik Grosskopf
Digital



One Way
Erik Grosskopf
Digital

Changing Gears
Julia Cohen
Digital





Hello?
Melissa Gall
Mixed Media



Demon

By: Clare Mikulski

This is not the kind of lonely they write about in books.
This lonely isn't poetic.
This lonely jumps out of the shadows when you've gone home alone
again
and it helps you pick the scab of the night
while you're by yourself
for hours.

This shyness isn't the beautiful
ethereal kind
with big eyes and a secret diary heart
always looking for the key in other people's eyes.
This shyness is violent
strangling you into silence
slapping neon red embarrassment into your face
when you choke out a disjointed sentence.

These demons aren't fairytale dragons.
They're not the ugly ones writhing on the floor of the gym during the AA meeting either.
They wait in your bedroom for you,
they get you when you're alone.

Ink
Colette Kocek
Painting





The Void

By: Madeline Nevis



Lips stained bittersweet crimson,
parted to reveal a void.
Words dead and rotting in our throat:
“I love you.”
“I’m sorry.”
We had our chances to resuscitate them:
to let them escape
(blowing sorrowful smoke rings)
but pride clenched our jaw.
Our words scratched rabidly at the roof of our mouth
blood caked under their fingernails
until they were buried under
little tombstone teeth.

Kaleidoscope irises frozen over yet
pleading.
Our eyes beg for the love
we never gave.



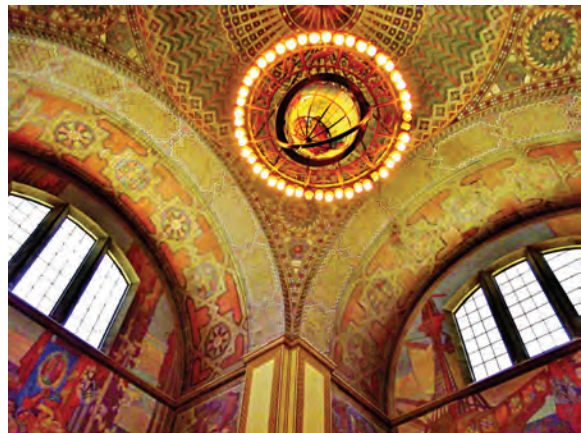
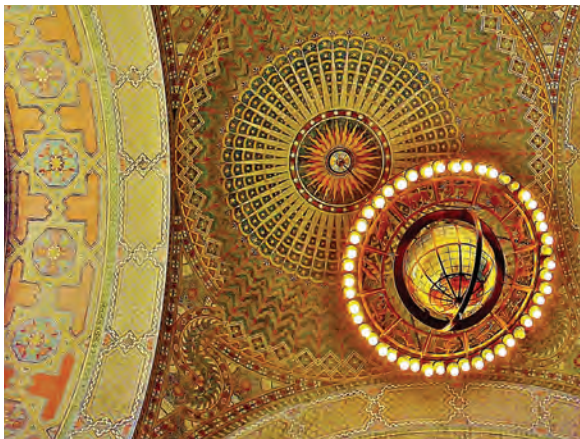
My Lips Are Concealed
Sara Mitrovic
Drawing



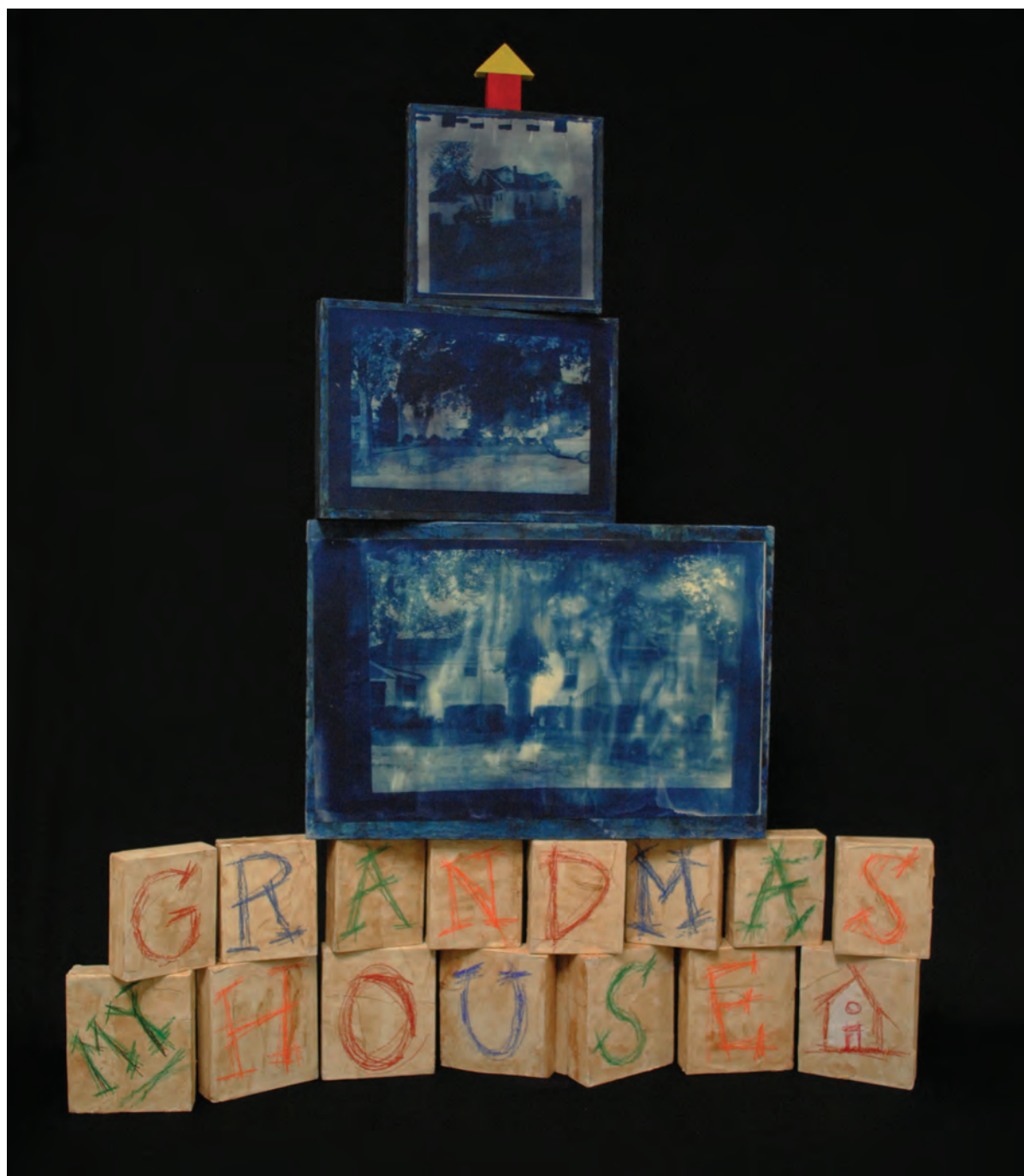
Reconciliation

By: Clare Mikulski

I am not perfect. I learned in Sunday school when I was very young that only Jesus is perfect, The Virgin Mother a close second, and God the Father transcending perfection because he created it. I have fingered the rosary with the best of them, my Glory Bes and my Hail Marys and my Our Fathers trickling out from barely-parted, ever-humble lips, allegedly flying up, past the ceiling to something bigger, some omniscient power that would read the innermost secrets of my heart and soul as casually as a menu, and damn me for every spiritual grease smudge and coffee stain. I never questioned the helium rise of my words and thoughts and prayers. I never bet against the glow of candles, the iconography, or the heady, sickly-sweet haze of incense spilling from the golden orb swinging hypnotically at the end of the chain. But then there was the loss of that thing ignorance, so often mistaken for innocence. The winter I was confirmed, I learned many things. I learned things from priests in white collars in enormous, glorious, impersonal cathedrals. I learned things from girls in sweatpants and braids, in close, glowing bedrooms. I went to a talk in the church after hours, and it looked different. Almost all the candles were out. Someone was there to talk to us, about growing up, about media, about sexuality, about responsibility, about choices, about things that seemed so sordid, enticing, and alien, so colossal that it seemed I could never understand all of them fully. I looked at the candle in the red jar, the one they told me was Jesus, present in the church, put out once a year before Easter. Everything they were telling me, everything I was supposed to do and not do, seemed impossible. It felt sacrilegious, to condemn huge swaths of information, of life to be lived, in the name of God. Reconciling my Catholicism with the things I had learned beyond the wooden doors of the vestibule meant pouring the vastness of the world into a communion chalice, stepping forward once a week to take a chaste sip. It felt ridiculous, like putting Jesus in a single candle.



Athenaeum
Natalie Krause
Digital



Grandma's House
Elizabeth Abbs
Mixed Media



Off Their Rockers: Spiral
Natalie Krause
Mixed Media

Ashes, Ashes, We All Fall Down

By: Madeline Nevis

What's gone is gone yet never quite.
She wields a tube of lipstick in her trembling fingers
(or what once were fingers)
as shards of lip clatter to the floor.
A scarlet avalanche.

Her skeletal nostrils are smothered
in the smell of burning.
She is a crumpled paper doll
her edges blackened
from some reckless child
who left her too close to a candle.

Those boys used to inhale her freckled beauty
like lung-hugging smoke from rusty Marlboros.
Look at us but do not touch
the thorn-adorned crown of beauty.

Now those boys slide their plastic eyes away
until only the whites peek out
as she slips by,
trying to be the ghost she should be
if only God had willed it.

Now she feels pretty as mudslides.

She molds her decrepit shell of a body
back into the shape of a girl
(or what she can remember a girl should be)
kneading her scaly skin into
pearls.

But that could never fool the burnt beauty.
No matter the incessant ticking of time,
mirrors sneer and
eyes hiss.

If she will just forget who she is,
she can forget who she isn't.
Burnt toast on a platter,
bite of scarlet lipstick.



Understanding
Dani De La Fuente
Mixed Media



Stoplight Truths

By: Elizabeth Deneen



1 TOP


Benjamin Pilarczyk
Digital

And you hit a red light, and it's kind of like you're not even part of the scene, kind of like you're watching a movie. Because you've never noticed before how choreographed it all is, this stoplight dance that all the cars are doing. Lights the color of Christmas blinking on and off systematically, cars peeling off to the left like synchronized swimmers diving into the pool. It's a beautiful kind of chaos—everyone following unspoken rules that hang in the air, thick like walls separating cars on different paths. And you wonder if some stranger is looking down on you from heaven, wondering what kind of magic this is, trying to divine what rule we are all following that makes all this work so perfectly like parts of some great invisible machine. To him, it's just some random colors, painted circles appearing and disappearing, glowing above the heads of cars.

It is such a beautiful moment, one of the earth's favorite games. Tens of cars full of people, rushing and bustling and roaring their way to the next destination, all stopped under the democratic necessity to establish order, to allow for the intersection of a hundred different forces. Funneling them systematically in their new directions, spewing out impatient drivers even more determined to elude the necessity to slow down, thirsting to make up for lost time.

“It's a *beautiful* kind of *chaos*.”

And if you're lucky, you're turning right, because you can evade the demands of nature to stop and reflect by sneaking in a little recklessly between the flow of cars that are rushing along, inserting yourself into a new grain of wood. Whole new direction, whole new slew of people to cut off, cars to tailgate, and fumes to inhale.



But no, today, you are stuck at a remarkably long red light, and you are watching the headlights approach and fade past your line of vision, blinding you momentarily as they go, all glowing their own shade of hope. Some of them golden-tinged like the old Christmas lights that you see in the winter, and others the bluer, brighter white of the new technology that's come creeping in.

“All stopped under the *democratic* necessity to *establish* order, to allow for the *intersection* of a hundred different forces.”

In this moment, in this darkness, you can forget about the dingy gray of the concrete highway, the smeared windshields, and the polluted smell. You can just pretend that these lights are the only things that exist, that there is no gray area in the world, and instead it is just a sea of darkness in which we are pinpricks of hope and light and goodness, all following paths to where we need to go. For a moment, the garish billboards that loom overhead are cloaked in darkness. The tree-lined walls that cling to the edges of the highway are forgotten. Nothing exists but the world inside your car and the way that the curve of the steering wheel feels in your fingers and the glow of the streetlamps above.

But if you happened to look to your right—as I once did—you'd see a man in the next lane over, also stopped in this moment. This moment that lives in the space between earth's breaths, this hitch of the night that has become a ravine. And in the flickering gleam of the passing taillights, you see the most telling glimpse of him than perhaps anyone. It is a conversation with at first what you believe is himself, but eventually you understand is an invisible woman, encased in the glass of his windshield, to whom he is begging, explaining himself, slamming his hand on the steering wheel, building up his energy and then breaking down, lifting his chin up to God and mouthing the same word over and over. You wonder if this woman knows the words he says to her alone in his car, you wonder if she will ever know. Because the truth has never been so clear as in that moment. Never been so clear as at that stoplight.

“This *moment* that lives in the space *between earth's breaths*, this hitch of the *night* that has become a *ravine*.”

These are the stoplight truths. The ones that are so much more blinding and apparent in the moments we are forced to stop. The ones we can ignore when the light turns green and we are accelerating back to our usual speed. But what is lost in the rush? Perhaps we should try to learn from these moments of hell when our distractions disappear and all the things we try not to think of hit us.



August Landscape

By: Paige Dore

Upon a stretch of cerulean canvas
the orange rind drifts
from east to west
and down to up,
trailing citrus and sunlight
across an everlasting sky.

Warmth, like orange juice,
drips down the canvas,
spreading over oils and watercolors,
tinting emeralds and corals
with a golden sheen.
The paint is hot to the touch.

With my hand upon the sill,
I watch honey slide in slow
motion over varnished cotton balls
and glossy magnolias, towards my skin,
to ensconce me in an amber shell.

I taste heat and shine upon my tongue
and hear the rhythmic river of rays
sweep past me in a torrent of summer sun.



Hollow
Rebecca Gacek
Ceramic





Frame of Reference

By Vivian Drury

In Chinese culture, elephants are considered to be a symbol of many desired characteristics. A stone elephant is known as a sign of strength and power, while an elephant painted on a glass vase carries the meaning of peace and hope. Elephants are commonly molded with the trunk pointed upward toward the sky while following a trail of peanuts, symbolizing the elephant's happiness and ability to seek out joy at the ends of its path.

I remember my grandmother telling me that the word for elephant in Chinese is written and pronounced the same as “things to come,” illustrating that the elephant is a sign of good luck. She told me this with her eyes glanced down, leaving me to study her delicate eyelids covered with shimmering gold eye shadow and her skinny fingers as she gently stroked a small black frame with a vibrantly colored elephant tucked underneath the glass.

A few months before this moment, my grandparents decided to move out of their Ohio home and downsize to Virginia to be closer to my aunt for fear that a medical emergency were to spring upon them as their inner-timer ticked on. Since my grandfather was previously a military general, they were no strangers to moving. From the US to multiple cities in Europe, cardboard boxes and a new zip code were not uncommon to them. They thrived in change; picking up their lives and plopping them down half way across the globe wasn't a difficult task for them. But I was quite the opposite. I've grown up in two residences my entire life, allowing me to remain in my comfort zone and not budge year after year. I solely suppress memories of my grandparents in their Ohio home, the sound of the dogs scampering in and out of the house and familiar voices greeting me as they emerge through the back door after yet another trip to the near-by grocery store. This place was more than just an address; it was the rich soil on the top of a grassy hill that rooted my family tree strongly into place.

During my last visit, the house erupted into a place of total change and chaos. The majority of my family's conversations were based on the topic of who was going to get the table from Italy or the clock from Germany or coming up with strategies on getting the bed-set down from the second floor. I was asked every five minutes if I liked something or told that if I wanted something to speak up and spit it out before all the boxes were sealed, and the moving truck was pulling out of the driveway, and this house was no longer mine. It began to feel as though my grandparents were already tucked into their graves, leaving us with the objects that filled their home, just the stuff that made their lives livable. After years of memorizing every smell, every feel, every nook and cranny in this little home, I was somehow incredibly lost. Everything was transforming and the five-year-old in me wanted to sit there and pout until it all the change stopped and normalcy began to set in again. But the seventeen-year-old in me knew that that was never going to happen.

“After years of memorizing every smell, **every** feel, **every** nook and cranny in this little home, I was somehow *incredibly lost*.”

On the last day of our visit, as I was packing up my cosmetic bag in the bathroom, something bright hanging on the wall caught my eye and replayed every wonderful memory I had made in this house. A mosaic of vibrantly colored paper carefully pieced together to create the image of an elephant with its trunk held high while following a trail of peanuts lifted me out of my sorrows and into the realization that the good times weren't



Treasure
Elizabeth Abbs
Painting

over the moment my grandparents closed the door to this house. There was life waiting for us in Virginia, a new home with many more smells and feels and nooks and crannies to be discovered. This elephant spoke to me, telling me that so many amazing things were yet to come and that I must have hope for them.

As I gaze at this elephant resting upon my pale blue bedroom wall, I am reminded that with change there is sadness and confusion, but there is always luck and happiness following closely at its heels, like an elephant following a trail of peanuts hoping to find something pleasant at the end of its path.



Smudged

By: Claire Quinlan

I knew that when the car got to 200,000 miles I wouldn't feel any different.

Yet my father, in his worn jeans and faded sneakers, rugged cheeks and wire stubble, continued to circle the block, his Kris Kringle-esque fern eyes adhered to the smudged dash and that wretched odometer. Unfortunate homes lined the lengthy charcoal boulevard, a mosaic of caramel beer bottle glass spikes, black tire skids, "Thank you" plastic bags, and abyss-like potholes. The car positively skulked around them, jerking to an irrevocable stop every ten-and-a-half feet as my father checked the odometer for the 200,000-mile mark on the meter. It had just clicked to 199,999 miles, a black 9 creeping up into where the 8 used to be. There was a second where both numbers were visible. But only parts of each, and then it was just the 9.

"200,000 miles is the mark of a sturdy car and some damn resilient people," my father had said as I had gotten in the car fifteen minutes ago. I didn't understand how the fact that my dad refused to trade in the 1996 Honda Accord showed anything of our family's resilience. Stubbornness, maybe.

I knew the real reason he had taken me out in the car for this semi-pointless, self-absorbed, mini-landmark in our lives. It was stuff-yourself-with-turkey day, my first break from my first year of college. "It's miles and miles out of my comfort zone," my father had said when I chose my school. The past few months had been my first time away from home (and my father) for more than a weekend, and it for sure didn't help that my father sent me school transfer pamphlets instead of cookie-filled care packages to my dorm. I felt supremely alone.

"200,000 miles is the mark of a sturdy car and some *damn resilient people*"

I would turn eighteen tomorrow too, the fact of which was most likely piling onto my father's already wobbly emotional edifice. The foundation of his frankly pathetic structure had visible cracks from his rough time growing up, its metaphorical floors stacked haphazardly and hurriedly, showing years and years of his rejection and frank neglect of his own feelings. And just now, I realized, as we turned the corner back onto the street we started on (and had driven on four other times), that all he had for walls were façades. The look in his glassy eyes at that moment suggested that I had been throwing small stones at those same fake walls with every year I grew out of the image of that little girl he had cared about so much.

My dad and I both knew I wasn't going to feel or be any different once I turned eighteen and went back to college. Same old me would be back for Christmas. My eyes would still match his and my teeth would still be ridged at the tops. I would still hate bubble gum, despise corned beef, and do anything to make him happy. Except I would never ever live in that dank grey squat house on that mosaic road; I would never be seventeen again and now, as the filthy barometer's numbers all changed to a 2 and five 0s—and my dad let out a broken bellow of muffled pride—the car would never show anything less than 200,000 miles on that smudged odometer.



Scottie
Molly Miklosz
Print

Train of Thought

By: Josh Althoff

A broken mirror, a ticking clock,
an off-center piece, a crippled walk,
a hopeful man and boy who fought
for passage on the Train of Thought.

It bridges paths across this realm
of swirling dreams, afraid they fell
plunging into madness, climbing out
wondering what they had just fought about.

The mind forgives, the mind forgets,
but all the Heart does is relent
and tries to sway Mind of its taut,
disrupt, derail, the Train of Thought.

But the Train runs on no tracks,
it makes its own as it moves back
and forwards and to the sides,
this Train deceives a mortal Eye.

And no mortal Eye shall gaze upon
the Train, for the Eye's gaze is drawn
by rumors, whispers of the Heart
which bathes Eye in light, seeing dark.

But despite the evil Heart's ill will
the Train forges on, continuing till
the Mind gives up and the Heart takes reins,
boiling the blood while the Mind goes tame.

And now set aside, the Train creaks and cracks,
no destination, it can't go back,
so the man and boy got off the train
to seek the Heart, the pretty pain.

Scott
Molly Miklosz
Water Color



Pursecution

By: Josh Althoff

Pursecution is a terrible thing,
a fault that has yet to be righted.

For if we kill all the purses, then what shall we carry?
Some people are very short-sighted.

Satchels are simply too bulky and big,
whereas handbags are woefully small.
If we execute purses, what are we to do?
I might not tote a bag at all.



Bird Cage Ring
Grace Barone
Metals

A Bird in the Hand

By: Josh Althoff

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,
Yet I'd rather have one in the tree.
For one I can look at and know that it's there,
But the other I know must be free.

Well

By: Josh Althoff

Well, well. I don't know what to say.
I gave you all my hope, but then you took it all away.
You granted me the wish and will to never use you again,
The loss of my quarter is supremely hard to mend.

Well, well. Why are you still here?
Do you wish to see more of my pain? More of my tears?
You pale in comparison to the friendliness of others.
But I suppose I have more change here. Well, have another.

Well, well. I'm supremely mad this time,
I dropped in a quarter first, but now you've cost me a dime,
And my wish remains unanswered. I really need to know
If this wishing well's for real, or is it really just for show?



Yosemite Valley
Jacob Dutler
Digital



Food
Chloe Donile
Mixed Media



For all the things that Someone once told me

By: Vivian Drury



Someone once told me
that in your pocket there is a coin.
You cannot touch it
or deposit it
or feed it to a machine in exchange for a gumball.
But I promise you,
it is there.

This coin has
two distinct
sides.

These sides are directly proportional.
You cannot have one side
without the other.

On one side of this coin lies fear
with shaking bones—
Sweaty palms.
Uneasiness.
Confusion.

But the other holds freedom
with a smile nested in one's cheeks—
Broad shoulders.
Triumph.
Pride.
Glee.
Freedom.



Furrows
Ines Makismovic
Digital



Just like the coin,
life will bring you fear,
forcing you to experience the
weak knees.
Thumping heartbeat.
The idea that what you are about to undergo
leads into the unknown.

But just like the coin,
life will bring you freedom,
embracing the
raised chin.
Reaching spine.
The joy.
The power.
The idea that you have defeated the past,
and what lies ahead
sends the sun's infinite brightness to shame.

So promise me
that you will always know
when there is fear;
flip over your coin
and you will find
freedom.



Basking
Anna Weber
Digital



Meditation:

“The Day of Time”

By: Madeline Simms

The sun hovers above the rooftop,
a bluebird darts across the canvas,
a warm awakening tainted blue.

And on my walk
I wear shoes of dew
-slippery toes
battling for traction,

I pause
a slip, a skate, I pause-

I am adrift in morning.
Lost in nature's conversation,
I breathe,

-my words are of no
use here.

The dog laying on the steps, the cat,
faithful to the windowsill,
together paroling the morning

from the safety of home: the tags
say things like, “Buddy” and “Toby.”
Home is only temporary.

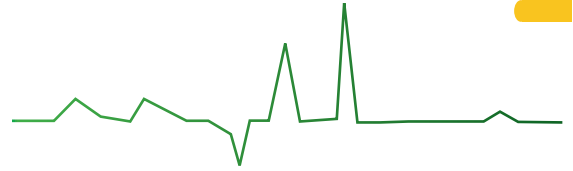
Where are my tags?

The proud oak towers,
renting its limbs to
greedy squirrels,
corpulent before the harvest.

The mysterious music box of morning,
a symphony from the leaves
becomes my own.



Silence



By: Jane Doyle

Everyone always thinks of Silence as sad and lonely; but it is not so.

Silence has many friends,

like Reverie, or Thought, or Introspection.

They three gather together—for they cannot exist without one another—and they all follow Silence around, waiting for her to turn her attention to them.

like Company, or Comfort, or Friendship.

Because in their truest form, Silence is always included. She proves their existence in its heightened state, and they highlight her beauty.

like Meditation, or Prayer, or Focus.

Because they don't much like to hang around Noise; he always interrupts them and doesn't let them go about their business. Silence keeps them company but lets them work.

Admittedly, sometimes Silence ends up with the wrong crowd.

At times, she can be found

with Awkwardness or Discomfort.

They shuffle around behind Silence, peeking out every once in a while, pretending not to be there even though they cannot be ignored. Silence tries to escape but they persist.

with Tension or Rage.

Because when they are with Silence, it's worse than when they're alone. The air becomes dry and static-y, and sometimes Silence gets burned when Confrontation comes storming in.

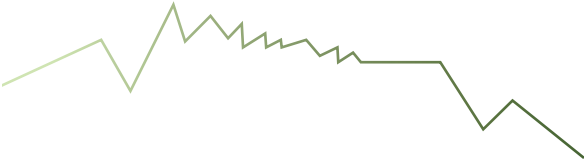
with Melancholy and Depression.

They never speak up or make a big fuss, but Silence can't just leave them alone, because then who would they have to console them? So she stays by their side and inadvertently enables them.

Silence is really quite kind and caring;

she just can't differentiate between who is good for her and who is not.

Everyone always thinks of Silence as sad and lonely, but it is not so.



By: Anika Ranginani



Finally, the dream catcher believed it had attained freedom. In what it thought to be the ultimate form of defiance, it had given up. It was going rogue. Now when night fell, the dream catcher no longer fought off the evil; it embraced it. *Dream safely*, it seemed to sneer.



Rain

By: Johnny Howorth



This weeping sky falls heavy
as darkness sweeps
and street lights grow dim;
a dismal downfall
sketched in earnest;
I can see
and I cringe.

These bleeding clouds,
vast clouds drawn out in the sky
envelop my life and display my sin
for another soaked life to see,
for another soaked life to become.

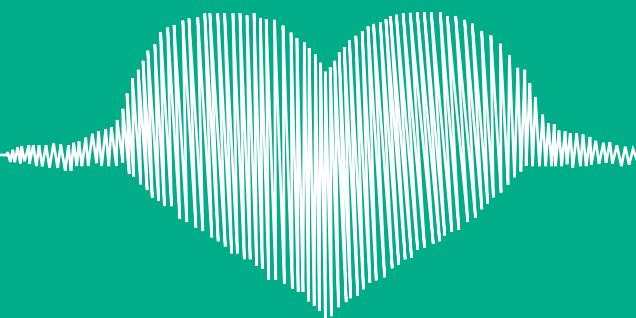
Rain slashes the trees,
leaves creep away;
wind whips at our spirits
as the rain douses us, day by day;
unending, unnerving,
relentless amounts
soaking all the homes
in everyway.

This weeping sky is unending.
A dismal night and dismal day,
these clouds that bleed out,
bleed hot humid rain and
are vast atop the emerald greens.
Unnerving, relentless,
this land of rain.

Colette
Madeline Bernstein
Drypoint



Shower
Hailey Brennan
Drawing



Dear Reader

By: Jane Doyle

It was never sudden, this...this feeling. It is not as if one day you picked me up and BAM—it happened right then. It was more of a process: each day you would sit with me, and we’d talk and you’d laugh when I would say something witty. And the feeling started to grow inside of me, until eventually it just completely overtook me. But it is not as if I expect you to...love—there, I said it, this is love—me back. I know I’m no longer new, I can be dull at times, and I’m not the prettiest around. Others have crisp white pages with fresh black ink and unbroken bindings, while my pages are yellowing and frayed at the edges, my text is fading, and my binding is barely hanging on. Sometimes I don’t have much to say. I can rattle on and on about nothing, and I can repeat myself for paragraphs on end. The newer editions have more attractive cover art—at least, more than just the title embossed on the front, like my plain cover—and maybe they even have gold on the edges of the pages. But somehow, you are fine with all of my faults. Despite all that I lack, I am still your favorite. You say I have character and that I say so much in so few words. And I guess that if you say that about me, then it must be true.

But this is more than me just returning the sentiment—I love you deeply, genuinely, instinctively. I live for the fleeting moments when your true beauty sneaks out. When you sit with me under a tree in the park, and the sunlight shines through your eyelashes, creating the faintest of shadows on my pages. When you follow along with my words using your index finger, I see the unique pattern of swirls on the pad of your finger, a pattern which has now come to signify, for me, pure beauty. The way that your eyes flit from word to word down the page makes me feel naked and utterly exposed, but also that what I have to say is worth saying. When you try to get all of the meaning possible out of me, sitting with a pen, underlining the insightful things I say or commenting on my prose, and, engulfed in complete focus, you begin biting the end of your pen and you furrow your brow. When we sit on the couch, not doing or saying much, just being together, the cat jumps into your lap and you lovingly run your fingers through his fur, and despite the fact that he has interrupted us, you never take your eyes away from my words.

“I love you deeply, g e n u i n e l y, *instinctively*.”

And maybe sometimes you drop me, or spill your coffee on me, or you throw me in a bag to be rattled around with crumpled gum wrappers and loose change—but realistically, no love is perfect. Sometimes I bore you, or we disagree, or I give you paper cuts (of course, I apologize every time). Yet in the long run, we both end up better. You are wiser and I am no longer lonely. I have newfound beauty to talk about, and you have new and profound furnishings for your intellect.

So please, don’t brush this off. I don’t care how many times you want to listen to me say the same things over, I’m happy to repeat myself and I promise to phrase things a little bit differently each time. But this love cannot be understated; for it is not the all-encompassing “reader” that I love, but the you-Reader—the Reader who, at this very moment, tosses my words in their mind, and wonders how any of these feelings or phrases or musings could come from a book



Lives of the Dead:

Stories from the Cemetery

By: Margaret Byrne

Frank (1923-1991)

A week in Hawaii, nine days in Mexico, a cruise in the Bahamas, a new car, a new toaster, a year's supply of chocolate: Frank tried for it all. He cut out the back of cereal boxes, saved the caps on sodas, and collected playing pieces that came with each purchase.

Enter to win!

No purchase necessary!

These were phrases that seduced him.

He bought what he had to, filled out entry forms, created accounts, and submitted codes. It was a passion turned obsession. Frank would come home from the job where he worked too long and was paid too little only to go to work on his own personal profession, scouring magazines and searching the web for any opportunity, big or small. He didn't care that he had no free time. He wasn't disheartened by his lack of success. "This one," he'd mumble, "this is the one."

For once in his life Frank wanted to know what it felt like to be a winner.

Lorena (1879-1965)

"She will always be remembered by her smile."

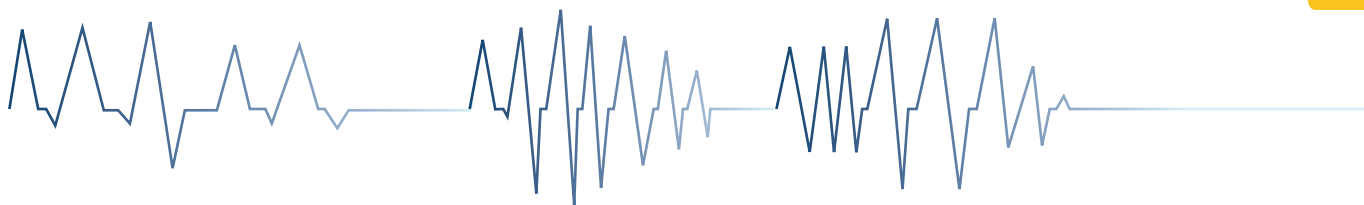
Lorena was proudly typical. She was a loving wife, a nurturing mother, and a doting grandmother. She did everything she was supposed to and lived a quiet life, just as expected. Even her death was just as expected on December 26, as to not ruin Christmas Day for everyone. Her husband was buried two years after her and her children another 30 something years later. The only trace of those grandchildren she doted on are some long withered flowers left on her son's neighboring grave. And now her plot's grass is browning, the flowers that were planted there are dead, and dirt cakes the sides of her once shiny headstone.

And as hard as we try no one can picture her smile.

Raymond (1922-2010)

As an old man he visited her stone. Every Sunday and Wednesday he came to converse with the lump of mineral. He rested a hand on the stone as he told it of his daily occupations. Sometimes a salty tear would slide down his cheek and land on the stone where it found its way into an engraved groove to make the letter sparkle in the sun. He didn't seem to mind the stone's silence despite his lamentations of loneliness.

Then one Wednesday he said, "I'll see you on Sunday dear." That Sunday lots of people in black came by the stone but the old man was not one of the crowd. He was, however, the purpose of their graveyard visit as they surrounded a freshly dug plot.



After the soil settled on the plot a new stone was placed next to the old with the same last name. Now no one speaks to her stone. But the air between the old stone and new stone stands still in quiet understanding.

Shelia (1994-2006)

“Our light, gone too young.”

Or maybe too old. Old enough to know overwhelming pain as she listened to the drip of the IV. Old enough to cry and scream as her momma held her and wept. Old enough to long and crave to walk in the sun again. Old enough to shudder and tremble as she understood there was no waking up this time.

Maybe we’re all too old.

Clifton (1927-2005) and Ryan (1922-2005)

Wander a bit and you’ll find Clifton Thompson. His plot is marked by pristine glass: an upright with an entire poem framed with ornate decorations carved into the mosaic of color. It even has a vase filled with undying flowers that look as though they are made of ice. Clifton’s last stand is an impressive one.

Now walk four steps north and nine steps east and you’ll find Ryan Crowell. No ‘Dearly Beloved’ does he rest under, not even close. Flat, made of granite, with a name and two years.

Ryan’s final year matches Clifton’s, seemingly their only similarity. They must have lived in two different worlds that could only intersect here, at their end.

But glory in their overlap: For here lie Clifton and Ryan, distinguishable now only by the size of their stone.



Three Heads Are Better Than None
Tyler Bednar
Digital



Ceramic Love

By: Carlina Green

I am a perfect china doll,
and I cannot fight back;
I'm on the edge so let me fall
into your arms before I crack.
Distance kills me with desire
to be lost in perfect sin;
I cannot prevent this fire
that consumes me from within.
I am a broken china doll.
Kiss my cold, ceramic cheek;
I have shattered from it all
because you made me weak.
So pull me close and look deep inside my soul -
I'm a broken china doll, but you make me whole.

Urbanite
Carlina Green
Digital



Tang
Katrina Nilles
Drawing



Blue Glass
Molly Miklosz
Metals



Art Deco Bracelet
Vassiliki Demakis
Metals



Memory

By: Abby Cundiff

A sketching artist,
a tracing
a shading
charcoal lines on the worn, wrinkled parchment.

A glistening pond,
a winking
a reflecting
blurred visions swimming in shimmering waves.

A smiling photographer,
a clicking
a flashing
the image crisp and perfect of what once was.

A flickering candle,
a burning
a sputtering
just a faintly glowing ruby ember.

A reaching hand into blackness,
a searching
a grasping
at nothing,

or something lost in the blink of an eye,
an elusive past
or simply a mere dream,
lost once more to the depths of time.



Crisp
Chloe Tausk
Digital



The Hulking Creature

By: Laura McAllister

I pity the hulking creature
who wears awkward, long dresses
and ill-fitting cardigans buttoned
only at the top.
She is the lovechild of
low intelligence and a lack of self-esteem,
locked into the miserable universe of
social isolation,
living the orbit of a far-away comet,
watching distant planets dance
around a star.
She shivers and pulls her dress down to her ankles,
tracing her hidden tattoos
to keep her numb fingers occupied,
occasionally smashing
into another space rock and
hovering through infinity until she finds
a new safe spot.
She never attempts to befriend
another fallen rider or
swim to the tantalizing solar system,
never able to expose her chilly
collarbone or her frosty knees,
left undiscovered until
her ink designs temporarily disturb
the concentric circles of the cliques
she so longed to join.



Makers

By: Margaret Byrne

Every crystal glass my mother ever handed me to set on the table, I thought about dropping.
Part of me wanted to see the lovely thing shattered across the floor.
With every drawing my clumsy childish hand scribbled came a secret wish to rip it to shreds.
I fantasized during my violin lessons of dragging the bow along the strings hard enough to cause the screeching crunch that would be my orchestral rendition of the cries of the damned.
I wanted, in part, to wreck everything.

My first thought was, “Her eyes are blue.”
My second thought was, “A little squeeze and I could easily crush her.”
Those were the first two thoughts I had when my baby sister was first placed in my arms.
Those eyes, luminous and piercing, got me first.
But the second thought, a statement that crept into my mind without warning or permission, I recoiled at in disgust.
How could I think something so violent? And about this tiny little person who shared our mother’s eyes?
I think it was because she was the most delicate thing to ever rest in my arms.

Some people make and some people break.
It was then that I realized breaking is all I do.
So I looked down at baby blue in my arms and thought about all the people out there that could break her.
For almost a second I was one of them.
But I hadn’t gotten far walking on ripped paper and shattered glass.
So I leaned down and put my lips right up next to that little girl’s little ear and whispered,
“Stick with me baby blue, we’ll be makers of this world.”

Mill Lake
Katrina Nilles
Mixed Media





Wisdom

By: Elizabeth Deneen

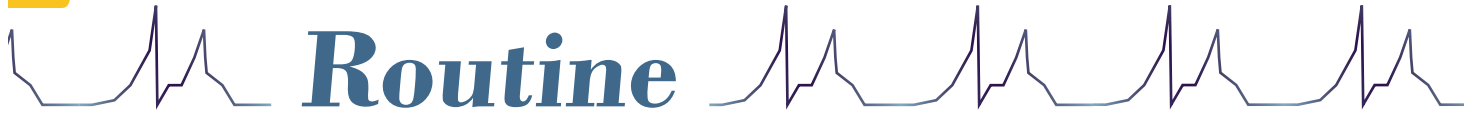


They say that if you do anything, then you have got to get wisdom. Get it at all costs. Tear it from your food, dig it out of the ground, coax strangers into giving it to you. Sometimes I don't know if I go about my search correctly, but nevertheless I have stumbled across a million truths. Some of them were dry, like the cliché advice that for years has been transcribed onto small slips of paper and stuffed into shells of tasteless cookies. Other things I learned from fake celebrities who spew nonsense that nevertheless resonates with me when I trail my fingers along the bolded print of the glossy magazine page. I divine bits of the meaning of life in the bubbly print on the back of shampoo bottles, water bottles, soda caps, all trying to brighten your day in an effort to make you want their product. I have learned to pick up on the more subtle advice espoused by photographs, of moments captured in time and feelings of people dead or grown or moved on. Some people even preach wisdom on street corners, cramming their concise and well-formatted interpretations of ideas larger than themselves onto a mere few pages of a pamphlet. They stand at stoplights with smiles plastered on their faces and try to make you see their God.

Wisdom just as soon strikes me in a short sentence followed by a hashtag as it does in the highlighted sentences of a history textbook or in the quotes that manifest themselves by means of social media. I have found wisdom in my hair, in between the strands that I could never make look the way I wanted to. In the tears I cried at night, in the mistakes I've made, in my shaking hands, my knotted stomach, the risks that worked out and the risks that didn't. I have found wisdom in the shelves and racks of department stores and also from the cardboard signs of homeless people on the street. Speeches scrolling on telecasts, the books we read in school, even the eyes of the people who I walk past on the streets.

“Wisdom just as soon strikes me in a short sentence followed by a hashtag as it does in the highlighted sentences of a history textbook or in the quotes that manifest themselves by means of social media.”

I don't know if it is necessary to travel to all the countries on the earth to find wisdom. I could explore the city just outside my front door my whole life and never really wring it dry of all the things it is dying to tell me. I think the difference lies in the search, the desire to look deeper. Trust me, it is not always easy. We live in a world coated in sugar, relatively pleasing to the eye at first glance, and even easier to accept at face value. And often it is gut-wrenching and heart-breaking to look beyond the smiles plastered on everyone's face, to discredit the daily assurances we involuntarily give one another that we are completely and always “fine,” even to listen to the tragic stories on the news that are so much easier to block out. Yet, what I have been told is that even if it hurts and stings to give up the ignorance in our lives, the wisdom that we have made the first step in obtaining will come in time to heal the very wounds it created. We will cure the wounds of the harshness and reality of the world with wisdom; your wisdom will protect you.



Routine

By: Annika Murrell

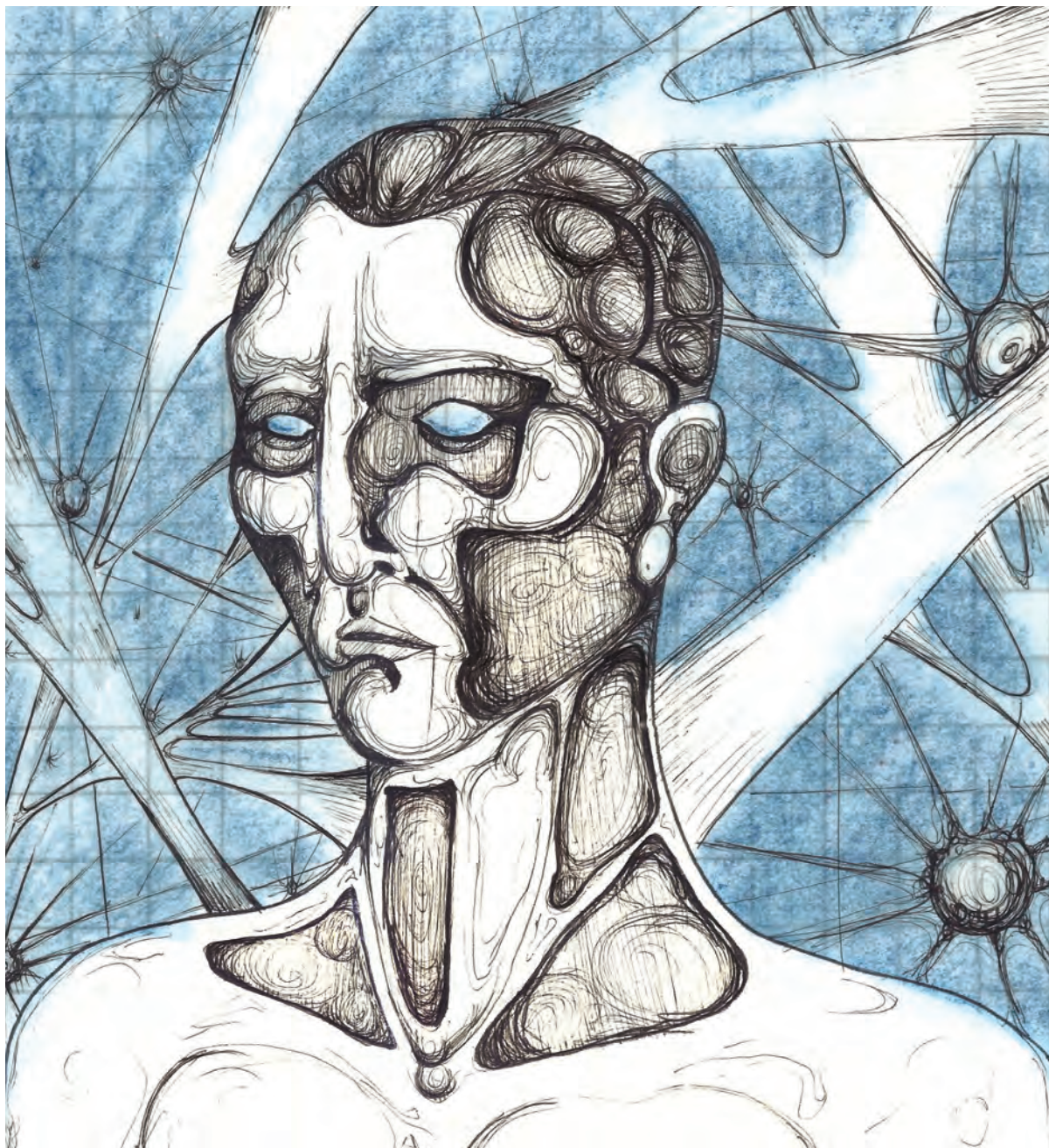
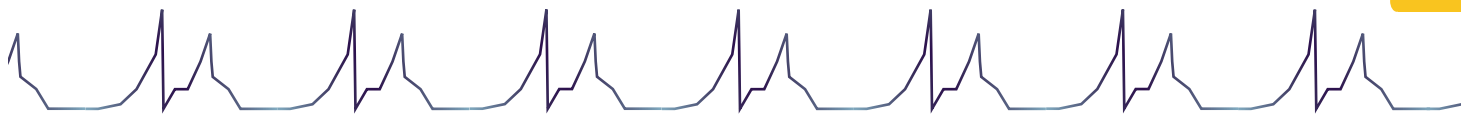
Every time I shifted my head to the side the smell hit me again. It was the smell of a scab, like blood or burnt plastic or beef jerky I used to eat on road trips. It was the smell of my own flesh dying. In the span of a month that enormous scab and overwhelming smell melted into a little pink scar, a barely visible mark on my collarbone. I can expose my collarbone, point to the scar and say “I have a heart defect” or “I had a pacemaker put in” or “yeah, it’s ‘really bad,’ as you put it” but I cannot expose my collarbone, point to the scar and say “I felt so sick I missed two or three days a week from fifth grade” or “I threw up more than I thought my stomach could hold and then dry heaved for about ten minutes after that” or “I couldn’t sleep but I was too exhausted to swallow my own spit” or “I hallucinated all night long” or worst of all, “the doctors call what I had a ‘routine procedure.’” My entire body might have hurt physically with the pain of the surgery, but every part of me absolutely ached with the knowledge that what happened to me does not have the significance of being called “real surgery.” I felt as though I had been murdered and the surgical assistants who killed me with a single cut just washed my blood off their hands and went home to watch T.V. This is the equivalent of a tooth pulling in the cardiology world and yet I had been destroyed mentally, physically and emotionally. The only thing that thumped harder than my raging headache that night was the phrase “every five to ten years” because that’s how long a pacemaker, a miracle hell-spawn lasts. Even to me the surgery should be routine. I mean, why not?

**“I had been destroyed mentally,
physically and emotionally.”**

Simply the act of cutting me open is somebody else’s nine-to-five. Get up, same old suit and tie, daily commute, elevator music, tell a thirteen year old “Yeah, we’re gone have to crack your chest open—well, this isn’t worth crying over.” My entire life, my existence on this earth depends on a bunch of middle aged, balding men who have made an industry out of saving the lives of little children. Saving lives—it sounds noble, and then you meet the people. It’s not common knowledge, but cardiologists are known to blast top 40’s in the operating room. This image has a sick humor to me. One day they are sitting in a waiting room, down on eye level, explaining how safe and careful they’ll be, how in the big scheme of things, it isn’t a bad surgery at all; and the next day, they are dancing around in their green scrubs, surrounding the cold metal table with my body on it, tossing one another the scalpels and saws. What has completely rocked my world is their daily grind, made exciting only by the Bangerz album or the latest on Justin Bieber. Yet, I am completely dependent on them, because it is their repetition to the point of boredom that puts them at the top of their game, that gives them the highest survival rate you can get. It is their routine, and starting the day I could smell my own flesh, it became mine.

**“What has *completely* rocked my
world is their daily grind.”**

Every five to ten years I will drop an entire summer vacation of ice cream and slip-n-slides to have a tube shoved down my throat and a gas mask put over my face and be undressed in a room full of strangers to replace the machine inside of me. I don’t even want this damn machine, this miracle hell-spawn, but I will spend my life not playing contact sports or riding roller coasters to keep it safe. I don’t even want this dinky little hunk of metal, but I cannot for even one second be separated from it for the rest of my entire life. I don’t even want a pacemaker but I will feel a literal internal clock counting down the heartbeats until I will be opened again like a UPS package. I feel as though I am living on bought time.



Untitled
Caroline Krasovec
Drawing



The Road Not Taken

Chloe Tausk
Mixed Media



Love

By: Emma Greifenkamp

Love
belongs in an insane asylum
and while it may be beautiful
it bruises and breaks and burns
like a homicidal pageant queen
hell-bent on drawing you in
then punishing you for being so foolish

we try and try
to bottle love up
in perfumes
and potions
we advertise it to the lonely
on the shiny pages of magazines
the emotionless faces of billboards
empty promises of fulfillment and romance
with no money-back guarantee
they sell knockoffs of it on the streets
to the ones with spare change
and nothing to lose

but love's not for sale
not advertised
paid for
tossed in the trash
when we grow tired of it
it's not a commodity
or a trendy accessory
to be admired
envied



Iced Heart
Madigan Courier
Digital



Barbie
Madeline Simms
Painting



Self-Portrait
Laura Furmanski
Drawing

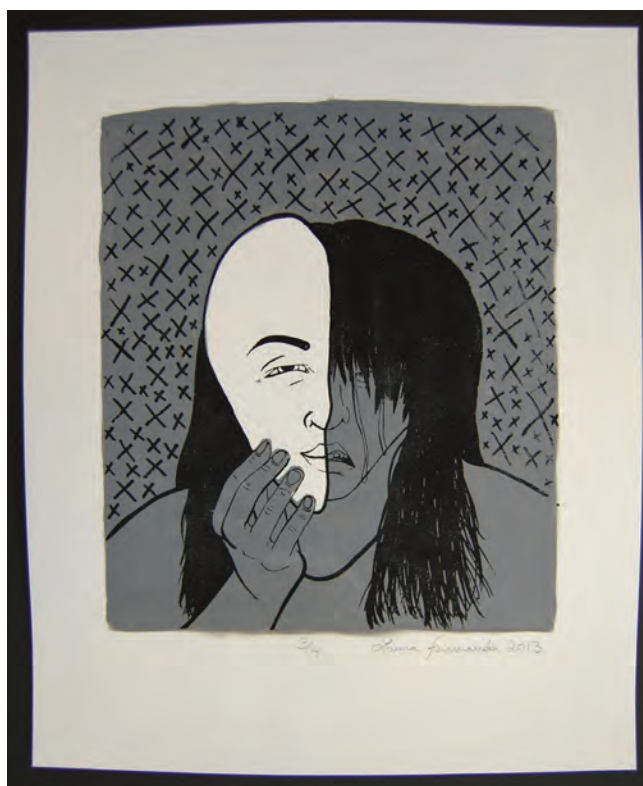
The Virgin Mary

By: Dan Lupano



In St. Peter's Basilica, under a sky more detailed than the real one sits the Pieta, a statue of the Virgin Mary holding the broken body of Christ. The statue is crippingly beautiful, tailored so precisely that it looks as if the sculpture draped a fine white sheet over the mother and son as the scene actually happened. Like a living body, the statue has a mingling of features and expressions, almost distracting from the larger scene. The ripple of a vein in Christ's opaline leg, the delicate bulging droplets of blood, the jutting ends of the crown of thorns, as sharp as bits of glass. The details are so genuine that Michelangelo Buonarroti devoted over a year of tender thought to shape down and sculpt the slab of granite during hour-less days and masochistic cycles of perfection. There was no thought of profit or fame in the sculptor's mind; there was only a steady hand that allowed him to cultivate divine inspiration.

In Normal, IL, there is a plastic statue of the Virgin Mary. It sits sunken in a wet front lawn and the paint is chipped. The light inside of the statue was broken when the statue got blown over by the wind and a mail truck bumped into it. It was stood up and coiled with a bungee cord to the post of the mail box. The company that makes the plastic statue has a jointed steel arm that grips a blank white mold, lowers it into a vat of gurgling gold house paint, then sets it on a platform where two black dots are punched into the dripping mother; the angle of the mechanism that adds the eyes is skewed so the Virgin is packed into a brown box not with proud tears the way that Buonarroti depicted, but with the cock-eyed expression of confusion. The statue can be bought at any local hardware store for \$7.99 and a separate statue of a silver Jesus can be bought for \$9.99.



Duality
Laura Furmanski
Silkscreen



An Infinite Landscape

By: Laura McAllister

I bet if I could reach up and touch the sky,
it would feel like velvet.

I would grab it in great big fistfuls
and lick my fingers clean
because the aroma of blackberries
would be too sweet to resist.

Every time my fingertips would run through it,
trails of phosphorescent stars
would fall in lines between.

I would leave long stripes
of twinkling glitter across the black,
which planes would fly between, blinking red and blue.

The silhouetted treetops
would tickle my chin
as I would trace a map
from the Big Dipper to Polaris,
from Taurus to Cassiopeia, to everywhere and back again.

Silence would fill my ears
and clog the air where I'm sitting,
and I would cry
with dark smears of fruit across my cheeks
and a soft sensation across my palms
because this universe we live in
has no boundaries.

Pale Moon Rising
Molly Dixon
Digital





The Plunge

By: Paige Dore

His idea began a pure thing,
a smooth and bright strip of rubber,
a toy meant for a child.
His thought, created in innocence,
unadulterated, unalloyed, lucid,
the masses detected and exposed in
their hunger for principles.
The notion swelled, pumped up
with pretense and helium,
grew to be so large, so tolerable, that it
blocked the sun and broke free
from its tethers and weights.
Floating, drifting, it traveled cross-country,
soaking up piece after piece of opinions,
criticisms, cultures, canons,
precedents, merging vapors into
a cloud of disorder, disillusionment.
As it continued to inflate, the rubber grew
thin and ragged; it lost its color.
He, the creator, the idealist,
turned from his thought and grew bitter,
and the rubber grew so large, so bloated,
that it popped, and all the mess
within its ruined boundaries
converged and grew heavy,
went crashing to the earth,
plummeting past old ideals
and soaring through empty hope,
until it collided with the sidewalk
and shattered, forced to
lay there quietly and dismally,
until at last, some zealous radical
discovered it, scooped it up,
and shoved it in his pocket
to save for a rainy day.

Diamond Grime
Lydia Stuart
Digital





Fading Light

(after “Purple” by Linda Pastan)

By: Aileen Dobersztyn

A slowly descending autumn hurts
more than a total whiteout:

Like dismal confetti
these perished leaves

shed from their branches,

vibrant color fading,
tree slowly balding.

Life vacates the
tenuous grasp of its

arms as the sun
abbreviates its visits.

Do trees grieve?
Is the autumnal equinox

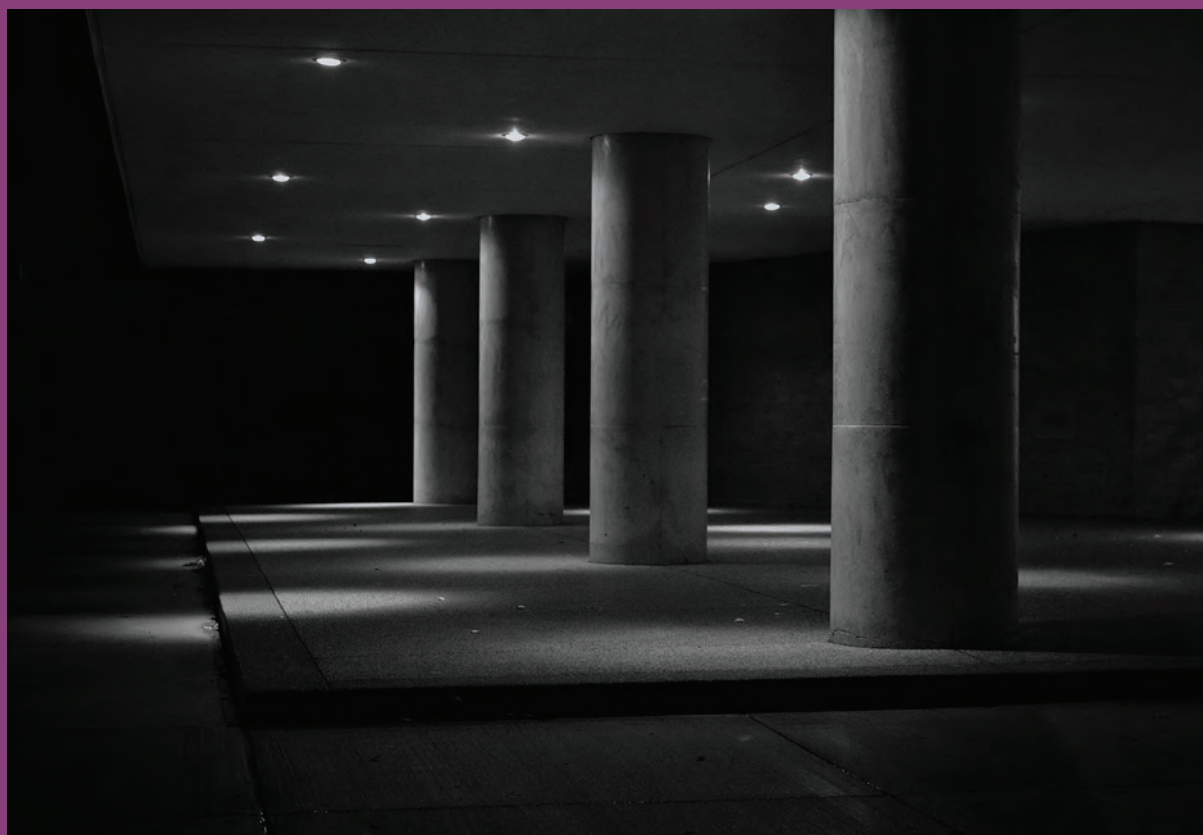
a day of pining, or
prelude to winter’s slumber

and eventual rebirth?

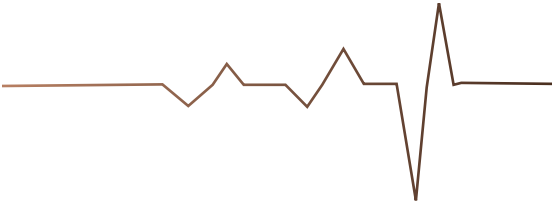
December snaps,
not unexpectedly,

but the numbing
pain still afflicts

my already red
cheeks and snifflly
nose.



South
Benjamin Pilarczyk
Silver Gelatin



The Sorrow Within a Rose

By: Maria Niemyska-Toczek

Raw wind whistles its way through silence
as generations of family shed tears from brilliant red eyes.
All gather around a six foot deep hole
that surrounds itself by the frigid December snow.
Sisters glance at faces that have always been so merry.
Oblivious to the grimness of this heartbreak,
a daughter receives a red delicate flower from unfamiliar hands.
The split green stem glows against the uneasy winter day,
as needle like thorns stick into young skin.
This loving flower,
slips and plummets from the hands of a toddler
to the corrupt terrain, that is now the home of her father.
Innocently,
she lays this final gift on her father's new and painful home,
questioning why the man she served Cinderella cup tea
and dressed in a pink tutu
lays in a smooth oak box.



Pensive
Chole Tausk
Drawing



Fracking
Emma Hirt
Painting

As I Can
Emma Hirt
Painting





Numbers

By: Gabbie Gresge

From the inside of the hollow hall, distant cries were heard. Flanked by the buzzing fluorescent lights, the doctor trudged into the room, his measured pace rapping on the speckled-tile floor beneath him.

The babies lay on the cold examination table. Glancing at their mother, the doctor checked his list one last time, just to make sure. Instances such as these were very rare; twins themselves were hard to come by, let alone of separate number classes. Hesitating slightly, knowing the accidental impact that he was about to make on the children, he held up their feet, and stamped the numbers on: 499 and 500. Shooting a sympathetic look at the yellowing woman laying silent on the bed, he took the children from the room, one in each arm. It would be the last time she saw them.

His first stop was to take the Zero, as they were called, to the special ward to be shipped to the camp. The doctor, himself, had been there, too. Among the other Zeros, he learned his trade, isolated from the disconnected world.

After depositing the Zero, he carried 499 to wing number four. It would be the last time that the child would see another kind.

Twenty years later, Marcus walked under the fluorescent lights, which echoed in the hollow hall. These days, witnessing as many births as he did, each stamp, each number, triggered a memory that seemed to be hidden in the recesses of his brain, a lion hiding in a jungle. Most days, it lay lurking there, echoing a lone, steady growl from the depths. Closer and closer were the moments of awe and terror when the lion reared out from the trees, thrashing at him. All he remembered for sure was something cold, the color yellow, and being carried by the rapping pace of someone. Recently, however, he sensed another presence in this memory, another warm being beside him in the arms of the rhythmic stranger.

These thoughts were kept inside.

Years such as these, of peace and of order, were delicate. It was as if the government was working to keep a bloom alive, constantly watering and caring for the sickly flower. Marcus knew that during these times opinions were confined and thoughts were minimal. Despite the silence, he believed that the disconnection between classes was reworking the very nature of humans- mothers forever separated from their unnamable children at birth, people's futures becoming as random as shuffling a deck of cards. He was the ace of spades.

Because as a Zero, you knew all, saw all. The 'lucky' ones knew of all of the Wards, and were the one-in-a-hundred chance of knowing the mysterious number that was stamped on each and every being's foot.

It was hard to watch, really. Marcus was often on stamp duty, and changed the course of people's lives with a swift movement of his hand. Today, he remembered a child that he had stamped as number 499. The being would be class number four, and would live until they were 99- two vital pieces of oneself that the child would never know.

Thrashing, clawing, eyes beating, the memory leaped from the jungle, without any sign of backing down.

Luke awoke to the walls that radiated cold. Looking out his single window, he could see the town square blanketed in rain and fog. Voices could be heard, mumbling, outside of the thick steel door.

For him, dreams were rare. Last night, however, a vibrant, all too tangible one kept him tossing and turning until the morning bell rang. Warmth beside him, cold around him, and the march of an unknown catalyst were familiar.

The fluorescent lights sang as he hopped out of bed, got dressed, and began his day with the robotic routine that would surely never end.

Step, pause, step.



The hum of rain surrounding him gave him a sense of shelter and comfort, in knowing that there were some things that the government couldn't control. Sickness, war, death and hate had been conquered. It was like discovering what the moon was made of- humans couldn't just leave the beautiful glowing orb in the sky a mystery. Everything needed an answer.

Step, pause, step.

His rhythmic pace was droning. Luke was tricked into believing that patrolling the "border" of Ward Four was an honorable job. Really, what it was was looking intimidating with a machine gun in your hand. When he was old enough to speak, he had been put through a camp of sorts. Ultimately, through physical and mental testing, his life was cut out for him.

What a load of bullshit.

Everything was nowadays. With each passing day, the withdrawal became more and more evident. People closed doors, talked in whispers. Nobody could seem to understand why they were all scarred with a number on their foot. Why did they all start with four? Why, at certain times, did people disappear?

There were answers for everything, but still the dark side of the moon remained a mystery.

Marcus marched into the dimly lit room, his eyes focused on a steel file cabinet looming in the corner.

**“It was a *mirage*, *shimmering* back and forth
in **blistering** sunlight.”**

Step, Pause, Step.

It was a mirage, shimmering back and forth in blistering sunlight. With each step towards the cabinet, Marcus felt that much farther away. Each step was hollow, echoing.

Destination finally reached, he drew the keys discreetly from his pocket. The light of the keys danced silently on the walls.

As he creaked the drawer open, Marcus checked his shoulder once, twice. He was surely alone. Flipping through the fat files of numbers 495, 496, 497, he grew more anxious. This answer was the dark side of the moon-unexplored, beautiful territory that would be his to claim.

He reached number 499.

Taking a deep breath, he slid the papers from the file. Racking his brain, luring the lion, Marcus searched for dates. July 4, 2066. Yes, that should be right.

The room glowed yellow with the hue of the fluorescent lights.

Surely enough, the lion devoured its prey in one fatal blow- the blood oozed in Marcus's brain as he arrived at number 499, 7/4/66.

CERTIFICATION OF BIRTH
[NO. 499]

LUKE
7 LBS 6 OZ
JULY 4, 2066

PROJECTED IQ: 140
PROJECTED PLACEMENT: ENFORCEMENT AND BORDER CONTROL



Its prey lay motionless on the floor. The lion, its work now done, retreated, snarling into the depths of the jungle.

His distant memory was right. With his other half tangible, Marcus prepared to find the last piece of the puzzle in the form of his brother, Luke.

It was late afternoon, and the sun was flirting with the horizon. Clouds cloaked the romance, casting shadows throughout Ward Four. Luke marched, to the beat of silence, ready for his shift to be over.

The bell sounded all too late, resonating an echoing clang from the tower.

Back inside the camp, Luke found himself amidst chaos.

“Boys!” the general boomed. “Settle down!”

And so, there was silence.

“We have a special situation on our hands. No information will be allowed except for the following: there is a fugitive, escaped. He is unarmed. He is not dangerous, although he bears knowledge that is lethal to our way of life. If one should come upon anyone suspicious attempting to cross our border, take aim. Fear no guilt.”

“Yes sir,” was the involuntary answer.

Back in the confine of his room, Luke sat. Once again, questions loomed in the back of his mind, a shark in deep water. Who was this fugitive? What did he know? Why did they refuse to give out information?

The dark side of the moon grew pitch black.

The next morning, Marcus trudged through the brush, in the blank void between the government base and the rest of the world. Everything was aligned and orderly and intentional: the Wards were separated enough to insure solidarity, yet close enough together so the government could manipulate them. In the epicenter of it all, the government base stood, boasting grey buildings that contained the hospital, Zero camp, and unknown operations. Between it all, was nothing.

This was the first time that Marcus had ventured outside of the base, and fear racked his system. The ground was dirt. The sun was buzzing, hot. A slight wind kissed his face. He carried a backpack with water, some food, his ID, and a Bible. Marcus had never read it before, but he found it in a storage room and it made him feel safe.

“If one should come upon anyone suspicious attempting to cross our border, *take aim*. Fear no guilt.”

Marcus marched along the tracks imprinted by government trucks. He knew the way because earlier that morning, he had seen a truck with the number four on it, heading north. His feet crunched the dirt beneath him.

Humming a tune, thinking a thought, he continued on. As night began to fall, Marcus came upon a speck along the tracks ahead of him. It was small, like a little star sitting on the ground. The fallen celestial broke the pattern of blankness that the dirt created.

The sun was falling, but there were no shadows.



As he came upon the speck, Marcus gazed in shock. In a crack in the ground, a tiny plant had sprouted. He had seen pictures before, and heard of the little green marvels, but had never laid eyes on one.

Plucking it from the ground, he carefully pressed it in between the pages of his Bible.

Three days later, with drops of water and crumbs of food left to aid him, Marcus spotted towers looming on the horizon. He had reached Ward Four.

Deciding to play it by ear, he walked on, fatigue and fear embedded in his mind.

Luke stood at the tower, watching. Look north, nothing. Turn west, nothing. Turn south.

A speck moved slowly, steadily, in the direction of his tower. Dusk was falling, and the searchlight passed over the intruder like a heartbeat.

Remembering what his general had said, Luke realized that this was the fugitive that was on the run.

The moonlight drenched the scene in white.

Poised to shoot, Luke found himself hesitating. This being came from somewhere else, a place kept secret to him and the rest of the Fours. Could this person, whoever it was, have the answers? Was there a number on their foot, too?

Marcus slinked down the stairs of the tower, into the shadows of the camp. The only physical border between Ward Four and the outside world was a wire fence. He could see the stranger's face now, a weary man around his age with piercing blue eyes.

How rare, he thought.

He has blue eyes too, thought Marcus, scanning the guard. He had finally reached his destination.

"Where do you come from?" the guard asked, faking bravery.

"It's a long story," Marcus replied.

Luke gazed at his thoughts like they were the night sky. The answers stood in front of him in the form of this man, and he knew it. Talking meant answers and death by his general who would surely find out if he neglected to kill the runaway. Shooting meant more dreams, more thick steel doors, and no escape to the dark side of the moon.

"Why are you here?" the guard questioned, the two separated only by the wire fence and the piercing moonlight. The guard kept checking his shoulder.

"Because," Marcus began, "I'm looking for someone."

Would this guard know Luke? Marcus considered asking him, and held back.

There was no use in trusting a stranger.

Marcus weighed his options. There would be another way, another shuttle to the dark side of the moon. There were other people with these answers.

What needed to be done needed to be done.

Gazing into the familiar lion eyes of the stranger standing across from him, he pointed his gun, breathed, and shot.

The shadows were gone, except for the heartbeat searchlight that cast a ray on the stranger, lying motionless on the hard ground. Luke, his work now done, walked back up to the tower.

The moon drifted behind a cloud.



Faceless Portrait
Matt Nutley
Silver Gelatin



Half-Hanged Mary

(after Margaret Atwood)

By: Madeline Nevis

("Half-Hanged Mary" was Mary Webster who was accused of witch-craft in the 1680s in a Puritan town in Massachusetts and hanged from a tree where according to one of the several surviving accounts, she was left all night. It is known that when she was cut down she was still alive since she lived for an additional fourteen years.)

2 a.m.

The moon becomes a frosted maggot
stagnant in an ebony sea.
Grass let me feel your life
one last time.

Please reach for my dangling toes.
Intertwine my shivering spirit.
Pull me down like a child who
tires of the swing that
etches ruby vines
into my
neck.

Hot thoughts
whistle in my mind like a tea kettle.
My swollen tongue slowly
inflates my skull with flesh.
My eyes narrow
and the corners of blue lips
sickle upwards
conjuring a smile.

I hurt, therefore I am.

I slip in and out
out and in;
I am sewing the patches of life.

*Those vultures
I think
They wish death upon
a dove.
They'll be here when
daybreaks to
harvest my corpse.
Come.
Make my entrails
your entrée.
But I will have made it through.
Flying on my broomstick,
cackling at those down below.*



When Death Gives Birth

By: Maeve McDermott

I wait out my life,
craving the consolation of a dance with death.
But it never comes
with the frozen confetti of a new year.
I hold my breath,
under the water that drips
from above my umbrellas,
yet I can still breathe.
Warm rays of sun can't poison me
past my outer layer,
I remain protected.
When fall strokes my frame with the loss
of life around me, I mourn.
Not for the death of the world,
but because my eyes remain open and lively.

There are few eyes that look past the curled extension of their lashes.
Few that see past the bitterness of the snow sheltered world
to recognize the birth of a new season.
Few that kiss the ripe sky,
yearning for the spruce embrace of Nature.
These select know that the leaves that fell from the trees
were only temporary losses.
We don't need to wait for the leaves to shrivel up
shrinking into their roots.
Instead of longing for permanence we recognize
that the snow that melts seeps
into the ground to find the beginning.



The Resting Field
Benjamin Pilarczyk
Digital



Quiet

By: Clare Mikulski

Loneliness comes,
unbidden.
It appears on Sunday mornings
and on Tuesday nights.
It has cat feet
like the fog
but sunshine
doesn't burn it off.



I Can See Right Through You
Tyler Bednar
Digital



Goodnot

By: James McMillin

why not sleep?

because i can do all these things
why not do them?

i can waste myself

come back to bed

[ending thought]



Landscape
Caroline Krasovec
Drawing



Special Thanks

Mr. Geddeis, the **administration**, & the **Board of Education** for their continuous support and patience.

Ms. Gutierrez for never ceasing to push us until we reached our potential.

Mr. Maffey for keeping things running smoothly and helping us develop the theme of this year's magazine.

Mrs. Rohlicek for always having an answer to our InDesign questions and her help in editing the pages.

Anika Ranginani for staying late and working on days without school in order to help us finish the magazine.

The talented writers and artists whose submissions make this magazine possible.



Kiwi
Jacob Dutler
Digital



Staff



Allie Miller

Editor-in-Chief

"If you love something, let it go. If you don't love something, definitely let it go. Basically, just drop everything, who cares."

- B.J. Novak



Ellie Herman

Editor-in-Chief

"Maybe our favorite quotations say more about us than about the stories and people we're quoting."

- John Green



Madeline Grodek

Art Editor

"We meet no ordinary people in our lives. If you give them a chance, everyone has something amazing to offer."

- Unknown

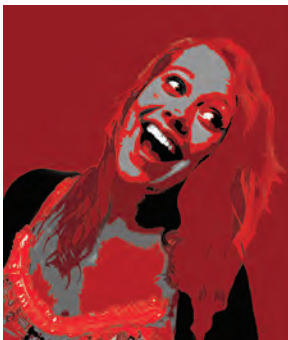


Katrina Nilles

Assistant Layout Editor

"Oh, but you can't expect to wield executive power just because some watery tart threw a sword at you."

- Monty Python and The Holy Grail



Molly Dixon

Image Editor

"Anyone that can make splatters on a canvas and can sell it for a million dollars is a friend of mine."

- Molly Dixon



Natalie Krause

Image Editor

"wow. much art. very writing. many spectrum. such menagerie."

- Doge

Art Staff: Vicky Demakis, Meggie Donley, Colette Kocak, Zoe Haworth, Laura McAllister, Anika Ranginani, Giana Sarantopoulos, Jessi Skonnig, Paige Spiess, Chloe Wesley



*"Great things are done
by a series of small things
brought together."*
- Vincent Van Gogh



Joseph Maffey

Literary Advisor

Mary Rohlicek

Art Advisor

Angela Gutierrez

Literary Advisor



Grace Bulger

Prose Editor

*"Confidence is 10% work
and 90% delusion."*

- Tina Fey



Jenny Goyer

Poetry Editor

*"I was being too intense.
Then I started relaxing
more, smiling more. And
then everything fell into
place."*

- Michael Phelps



Emma Cox

Assistant Poetry Editor

*"Happy girls are the
prettiest girls."*

- Audrey Hepburn



Jacob Collier

Assistant Prose Editor

*"Be the change you wish
to see in the world."*

- Mahatma Gandhi

Lit Staff: Michelle Blahnik, Andrea Branz, Greta Ciessau, Mary Claire Cox, Abby Cundiff, Vassiliki Demakis, Kayla Devereux, Megan Galbreath, Caroline Garrow, Maddie Green, Diana Kafkes, Laura McAllister, Joe Madden, Hannah McAtee, Anne McCarter, Madeline Nevis, Matt Nutley, Natalie Orsic, Anika Ranganani, Dheeksha Ranganani, Judy Rogel, Maddie Velisaris, Natalie Whalen, Jessie Wittenberg



Colophon

Menagerie is the student-run literary and art magazine of Lyons Township High School. Students submit their poems, short stories, plays, and art by January. In February, the poetry, prose, and editorial staffs meet every day after school for three weeks to read, discuss, and evaluate the pieces based on quality of writing, style, originality, emotional accessibility, and subject matter. From the literary staff's short lists, the literary advisors make the final selections and edit those pieces for grammatical and technical errors. In the following month, the art staff meets several days per week to integrate artwork with similarly themed literary pieces. Other exceptional art is selected for individual layouts. The art staff uses the computer program InDesign to create the magazine spreads. Finally, in early April, the editorial staff makes the final edits of the spreads before the finished product is sent to the printer.



Tree Climber
Dean Kuehn
Digital

Cover: Lynx Opaque 100# Cover Matte

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